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USIA Concedes Role As Secret Subsidizer

Washington (NANA) — Besides the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), the United States Information Agency (USIA) has been secretly subsidizing private organizations and individuals with influence on campus and public opinion.

In testimony before the House Appropriations Committee, the USIA has conceded that it covertly paid money to authors and publishing houses for certain books sold in this country as well as abroad.

As in the case of CIA subsidization of the National Student Association (NSA), the government's financial role was deliberately kept secret by USIA.

The explanation was brought out by Representative Glenard P. Lipscomb, California Republican, in questioning USIA Director Leonard Marks:

"Why is it wrong to let the American people know that when they buy and read a book that it was developed under government sponsorship?" Lipscomb asked.

"It minimizes their value," Marks replied.

At the committee's request a few months ago, Marks supplied the titles of the books and the Federal subsidy, \$90,258, for commissioning the manuscripts from the authors and helping defray the publishing expenses of the printing firms involved.

These books — 16 of them in 1965 — were among the 1,500 titles on which USIA paid approximately \$6 million for distribution through its overseas libraries.

MARK'S explanation of the secrecy was particularly interesting in view of the law

prohibiting the USIA from undertaking propaganda work inside the U.S.

"Where an audience overseas reads a book with the label of the U.S. Government, they look upon it in a particular manner," he said. "Where they read a book that is published in the U.S. and we distribute it, they look upon it differently as the expression of the author."

Yet he conceded that book readers in the U.S. also could buy the same book and take it as "an expression of the author" without ever knowing that the book had been originally solicited, even "edited" before publication and supported by Federal money in an attempt to convey certain government opinions and conclusions.

Marks insisted the USIA does not directly "hire" such authors. But it conveys to certain publishers and writers the understanding that, in his words, "if this book is written on this subject, we are a customer for you and will buy X copies."

As it frequently works out, the raw material for the book is under a classified label in a government agency or has otherwise been withheld from publication. When a book deal is made, the restrictions are lifted so the prospective author can have access to the material. In return, the agency usually demands the right to edit the author's manuscript.

Among recent books subsidized or inspired by the USIA, according to the House committee, were "The Truth About the Dominican Republic," by Jay Mallin; "President Kennedy in Africa," by Robert Marshall; "The Sword and the Plow," by Ralph P. Slater; "The Communist Front As a Weapon of Political Warfare," by J. E. Atkinson; "In Pursuit of World Order," by Richard N. Gardner, and "From Colonialism to